



# THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

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April, 2007

Editor, Theresa Graham

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## *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

This has been a relatively quiet period for TOS at the state level. Due to difficulties in finalizing an early date for the winter meeting, attendance was low but attendees had fun at Wheeler Refuge and were treated to excellent field trips.

Our next opportunity to meet as a group will be in Bristol for the Spring meeting. Details have been recently announced and are included on page two of this issue of *The Warbler*. I am looking forward to the meeting, at which Richard Connor will begin his term. I know that he will have as rewarding an experience as I have had.

It has been an honor to serve this excellent organization and I thank everyone for the support and hard work which helps make TOS so special.

Danny Gaddy  
President, Tennessee Ornithological Society

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## ***The Migrant Now Available Online***

Most back issues of *The Migrant* are now available online on the TOS website at <http://www.tnbirds.org/Migrant-electronic.htm>. From this site, you can browse the table of contents of each issue and then view and download individual articles in PDF format. At the end of February, most issues through the mid-1980s were online. The remaining issues should be online soon.

A collection of back issues of *The Migrant* on CD-ROM in PDF format is still available for purchase for \$5.00 for TOS members and \$55.00 for non-members; these prices include postage. To order, send a check made out to Tennessee Ornithological Society to: Mac McWhirter, TOS Treasurer, P.O. Box 22682, Memphis, TN 38122.

*Chuck Nicholson, TOS Webmaster*

## 2007 ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

### TO BE IN BRISTOL

### MAY 4-6, 2007

The 2007 TOS spring meeting and symposium will be held in Bristol, Tennessee and Virginia from Friday, May 4 through Sunday, May 6. The Stephen M. Russell Chapter of the TOS is hosting the meeting. Registration Friday evening and the meetings and dinner on Saturday will be held at the Waldo Miles Retreat Center. The center is at Sugar Hollow Park, Bristol, VA, which is on Lee Highway (US 11/19) about ½ mile north of the intersection with Old Airport Road. This is at Exit 7 on I-81, Bristol, Virginia. For information, contact Bill Grigsby, [bill@bristolbirdclub.org](mailto:bill@bristolbirdclub.org).

#### **Lodging:**

A block of rooms at the La Quinta, 1014 Old Airport Road, Bristol, VA, has been reserved for TOS. Call Stephanie McReynolds at (276) 669-9353, for reservations. Be sure to ask for the TOS meeting rates, which are \$56.00 per night (\$62.72 with tax). These rooms will be held for TOS members until April 20<sup>th</sup>.

This hotel is at Exit 7 of I-81 in Virginia. For more information and directions to the hotel visit the La Quinta website : <http://www.lq.com/lq/index.jsp> and use the locator for Bristol, Virginia.

#### **Field trips**

Trips will be held Saturday and Sunday morning. The destinations are not yet finalized but are likely to include Shady Valley, TN, Mount Rogers NRA and Whitetop Mountain, VA and Clinch Mountain WMA (VA). Check back soon for more details on the field trips.

**Program Speaker:** Dr. Richard (Dick) Peake. Dick is a life member of the AOU, the Association of Field Ornithologists, the Carolina Bird Club, the Houston Audubon Society, KOS, TOS (both Tennessee and Texas), VSO, and the Wilson Ornithological Society. Now Professor Emeritus of English, Dick gives illustrated bird programs and does occasional volunteer and professional birding tours in Texas and Virginia. He is the author of "Birds of the Virginia Cumberlands".

#### **Registration and Dinner**

The registration fee is \$10. Saturday Dinner and Program is \$15.00. Attendees may pay upon arrival, but pre-payment is encouraged. Pre-registration by April 20<sup>th</sup> is required for the dinner. Send checks to Bristol Bird Club, care of Janice Martin, 701 Euclid Avenue, Bristol, VA 24201.

#### **Schedule**

##### Friday, May 4

6:00 PM, Waldo Miles Retreat Center - Registration and refreshments; announcements; sign-up for field trips

##### Saturday, May 5

7:00 am - 12:00 pm Field trips-depart from La Quinta

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Lunch break

2:00 pm - Paper session - location to be announced

Time and location to be announced - TOS Board of Directors meeting

6:30 pm - Dinner and Program by Dr. Richard Peake at Waldo Miles Retreat Center

##### Sunday, May 6

7:00 a-12:00 pm Field trips-depart from La Quinta.

## TOS COMMENTS ON “DISTURB” IN EAGLE PROTECTION ACT

On January 4, 2007, TOS submitted comments to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) concerning a Rule defining “disturb” in the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA). TOS supported the likely delisting of the Bald Eagle from Threatened status during 2007. After delisting the Bald Eagle, primary protection of the Bald Eagle will shift from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to the BGEPA. “Disturbance” of Bald and Golden Eagles is prohibited in the BGEPA, but “disturb” had not previously been defined. The new rule would govern protection of both species.

The four alternative definitions of “disturb” and TOS’ evaluations follow:

1. *Alternative 1: No Action – “Disturb” would remain undefined. It would remain a prohibited act, with no regulatory interpretation.* **TOS comment:** This alternative would not provide the needed clarification of which actions would be likely to result in a violation of the law.

2. *Alternative 2: “Disturb” would be defined “To agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to the degree that disrupts the normal behavior of the eagle”.* This definition would be based on an immediate behavioral response on the part of an eagle(s), without consideration for secondary, biologically significant events. Indications of disturbance would include, but not be limited to: flushing from the nest, perch, or foraging area; alarm calls, disrupted flight patterns in the vicinity of the nest, roost tree, or foraging area; or any detectable physiological reaction indicating alarm.

**TOS comment:** Under this definition, every activity that causes an eagle to alter its normal routine in any way could be interpreted as a disturbance, whether or not there is any meaningful or long-term negative impact on the eagle(s). Meaningful enforcement could therefore be unnecessarily difficult. Public confidence in enforcement could therefore be compromised and eventually result in more disturbance and greater loss of habitat.

3. *Alternative 3 (preferred by FWS): “Disturb means to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to the degree that causes (i) injury or death to an eagle (including chicks and eggs) due to interference with breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or (ii) nest abandonment.”* Injury would be defined as, “a wound or other physical harm, including loss of biological fitness significant enough to pose a discernible risk to an eagle’s survival or productivity.” **TOS comment:** TOS concurs with the FWS (and with the American Bird Conservancy) that this definition would be the best of the four alternatives to protect bald and golden eagles and their habitats. This definition, in conjunction with the “National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines”, would aid land managers and the public in avoiding those activities that cause eagle disturbance and would also be enforceable.

4. *Alternative 4. “To purposely interfere with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering habits of a bald or golden eagle, causing injury or death to the eagle or its young or eggs.”* **TOS comment:** Since this would apply only to actions “intentionally” directed at the eagle(s), under this definition, construction, mining, etc. could proceed, even though eagles would be adversely impacted, because the eagles would presumably not be the intention of the action(s). This would therefore be an unacceptable definition of “disturb”.

For more details, the alternative definitions and interpretations can be found in the Rule and related draft environmental statement, respectively, at <http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/E6-21139.pdf> and <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/issues/BaldEagle/DisturbEA.pdf>. Further interpretation of the whether an activity would comprise “disturbance”, can be found in the 22-page “Draft National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines” at <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/issues/BaldEagle/Mgmt.Guidelines.2006.pdf>.

## **TVA Land Policy Protects Undeveloped Public Land Managed by TVA**

The TVA Board today approved a land policy that protects and preserves undeveloped public lands managed by TVA along reservoirs throughout the Tennessee Valley.

The final policy was recommended by the board's Community Relations Committee after receiving more than 5,000 comments from the public, organizations, elected officials and government agencies on how public lands should be managed by TVA. An overwhelming majority of the public comments supported the draft policy, which proposed no residential or retail development on TVA-managed land.

"Our committee worked through the comments from thousands of people and organizations to come up with a fair policy that protects public land while still allowing recreation and industrial development," said TVA Director Susan Williams, who chairs the Community Relations Committee. "The new policy reaffirms the usefulness and effectiveness of TVA's land planning process."

The final land policy was developed after a deliberative process that took into account advice and views by the Regional Resource Stewardship Council, past public input on land actions and land plans, and comments and resolutions submitted to the Community Relations Committee since August. The land policy was developed to ensure that the use of TVA reservoir land provides the overall greatest public value.

Changes in the final policy from the draft policy, which was submitted to the TVA Board and for public comment Sept. 29, include the following:

- Under the draft policy, TVA would limit reservoir lands allocated for industrial use to manufacturing businesses that require water access. The final policy says TVA will give preference for businesses making use of water access, but will also consider other businesses.
- Under the draft policy, TVA would not consider any deed modifications other than for flowage rights. Under the final policy, TVA will consider modifications that would open the land affected to recreational access, or in the case of land already open to the public, continue such access. TVA would also consider deed modifications for industrial use.

In addition to the provision of the policy that allows no residential or retail development, other key policy provisions also remain unchanged from the draft policy. Those include the following:

- TVA will continue to develop reservoir land-management plans with substantial public input and approval from the TVA Board.
- TVA will consider leasing and granting easements for commercial recreation or public recreation purposes if the property is allocated for that use in a reservoir land-management plan.
- TVA's non-reservoir property - primarily power and commercial properties - will continue to be managed as power assets, and decisions regarding disposal will be based on business considerations.

The TVA Board also requested a focused review of TVA's mineral holdings.

The land policy is available on TVA's Web site at [www.tva.com](http://www.tva.com) <<http://www.tva.com/>>. The new policy is effective immediately.

TVA manages public lands to protect the integrated operation of the TVA reservoir and power system, to provide for public use and enjoyment of the reservoir system, and to provide for continuing economic growth through the land-planning process in the Tennessee Valley.



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## **TOS Signs On To Bird Conservation Alliance Letter**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued a *Notice of Proposed Rule Making* that seeks public comment on whether it should take action to reduce the number of migratory bird collisions with communications towers.

For years, American Bird Conservancy and other conservation organizations have argued that millions of migratory birds are unnecessarily killed when they collide with over one hundred-thousand lit communications towers across the country. Science has shown that migratory birds, particularly those that migrate by night, are attracted to tower lights during bad weather and fly continually around the towers until they collide with the guy wires, the tower structure, each other, or drop from exhaustion. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have estimated the annual killing of migratory birds from communication towers ranges from 4 million to as much as 40 million.

In 2003, a joint letter was sent by 33 Bird Conservation Alliance (BCA) members representing leading conservation and scientific organizations, including TOS, requesting that the FCC act to require preventative measures on all existing and new communications towers to prevent avian mortality. The FCC now seeks comment on the extent of the effects of communications towers on migratory birds, including what action should be taken regarding the lighting of existing towers, tower height, tower location, the use of guy wires, and the co-location of new antennas on existing towers, to reduce migratory bird collisions with communications towers.

TOS signed on to the BCA letter urging the FCC to act now and implement preventative measures on all existing and new communications towers that could save millions of neotropical migratory birds from needless death. The letter will be posted on the TOS website once it has been submitted.

*Melinda Welton*  
*TOS Conservation Policy Committee Chair*

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## **Tennessee Bird Records Committee Report**

The Tennessee Bird Records Committee began the review process for a new batch of reports in late February. Once again we have had a good response from TOS members who submitted a large number of reports. The reports include a number of species which, if accepted by the Committee, would be new additions to the Official State Checklist including: Cackling Goose, South Polar Skua, and Black-throated Sparrow among others.

The Committee continues to work on updating the Official State Checklist and development of the TBRC website. We hope to soon have the beginnings of an online archive of documentation of bird records for the state.

Please continue to submit bird sighting reports. Details and forms are available on the TBRC website at <http://www.tnbirds.org/TBRC>

*Dean Edwards*  
*Secretary, Tennessee Bird Records Committee*

## NORTH ALABAMA 2ND ANNUAL BIRDING FESTIVAL

Decatur, Alabama, home of the new North Alabama Birding Festival. Set for May 4-6, 2007, the North Alabama Birding Festival offers a free day-long birding EXPO with children's activities, craft workshops, and live wildlife demonstration; nationally known speakers; guided field trips; and other art exhibits and presentations.

Lined up for the 2007 festival are exhibits, activities for children, a raptor demonstration, and a book signing by James T. Felder and Charles Seifried. Together, Felder and Seifried produced *Alabama Canyons*, an in-depth guide to Bankhead National Forest.

Workshops on Saturday include dissecting owl pellets, constructing a birdhouse, carving a bird decoy, landscaping to attract wildlife, and Birding 101. Attendees will also have the opportunity to see and learn about various raptors. A licensed raptor expert will present a bald eagle, golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, an eagle owl, and a falcon and will share their expertise on the basics and the handling of these types of birds.

Located adjacent to Rhodes Ferry Park is the Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites which will host the Birding 101 workshop as well as the Wildlife and Audubon Art Exhibit. Displays and exhibits will be provided by Alabama Wildlife Federation, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resource, Audubon Society, Alabama Extension System, Wheeler Wildlife Refuge and Association, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Adventure GPS, Wild Birds Unlimited, Tennessee Valley RC&D, and other various artists.

For an up close look at the different species in their natural habitat, choose one of the guided field trips to be held on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Friday's trips include a driving tour to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge for an opportunity to see many waterfowl's species such as ducks, geese, wading geese, and other migratory birds.

Saturday field trips consist of several different outings to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge and Swan Creek Wildlife Management Area for some of the best shorebird habitat in the area and a chance to see waterbirds, migrant and resident songbirds, and sparrows. Or, select from a combination driving and walking tour to Monte Sano State Park and Hays Nature Preserve in Huntsville in search of migrant warblers, vireos, flycatchers and others by mountaintop and floodplain woodlands.

Located north of Huntsville and just a short drive away is the Thomas Agricultural Research Station with access to grasslands and agricultural lands associated with Alabama A & M University. This tour takes birders in search of grassland birds, including the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher. Or, head west to the Shoals for a tour of a variety of habitats and a variety of migrant and resident birds. This tour consists of Joe Wheeler State Park, Town Creek Marsh, Leighton Ponds, dams along the Tennessee River, Key Cave NWR, and other sites as time permits.

Field trips to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge and Swan Creek Wildlife Management area are also offered on Sunday mornings. There is a small fee associated with the field trips and pre-registration is required.

For more information or to request a festival brochure, contact the Decatur-Morgan County Convention & Visitors Bureau at 256.350.2028 or 800.239.7219 or visit their website at [www.deaturcvb.org](http://www.deaturcvb.org) and click on the Birding Festival icon. To request a visitor's guide to the North Alabama Birding Trail, call 866-23VISIT or download a copy at [www.northalabamabirdingtrail.com](http://www.northalabamabirdingtrail.com).

## **Memorial Tribute To Vernon Charles Berry**

*submitted by Melissa Turrentine*

Age 85 of Lebanon, Charles died peacefully at home on October 30, 2006 after a year-long battle with lung cancer. Preceding him in death, in addition to his parents, was his wife of nearly 60 years, Earline. We could tell you about the Charles who was a Marine in WWII serving in Guadalcanal or a dedicated high ranking Soil Conservation Service employee. Instead, we want you to know the other "Charles" that our TOS dearly loved.

Admittedly, birds and his team were competition for Charles, a loyal University of Tennessee Football fan. Often he listened to the game if one was at the same time as the meeting- but he still attended the meeting. He always kept one ear in on our meeting, added his "two cents" while keeping tabs on the score the ball game.

In addition to his two "girls", wife Earline and daughter Harriett, Charles' fondness and love spilled over in our natural world. Charles forever was trying to outwit the grackles, starlings, squirrels from his feeders. He also took pleasure in keeping watch over the wood ducks on the neighboring pond. Even toward the very end of his days, he enjoyed the birds feeding and had fixed the birds up with the best. Daughter Harriet wrote me the following, "By the way, Daddy's eyesight and hearing had pretty well failed him by Saturday, but not before he saw a handful of towhees at one of the feeders. He was delighted. Also in the last several weeks we've been "upgrading" the bird and squirrel feeders (as well as getting a solar powered fountain/bird bath), and he was doing the kid-in-a-candy-store number. The house joke was that he'd finally decided he had everything he ever wanted, and decided to pass his good fortune on to the birds."

Charles loved to travel and learn- something the whole family treasured. Charles traveled to the end, whether it was seeing the new symphony hall in Nashville or going for his favorite dairy treat, he was determined that life would not pass him by. He knew that life was to enjoy what you have- in his case, it was family, and do things you love together.

Charles' dry sense of humor will be missed as well his quiet nature. When he did speak, it was either filled with humor or an astute observation about the birds. The joke between Charles and myself was, "I am sure glad you got to see me..."- we ended every parting with one of us making sure this was said. The gleam in his eye and his smile we will forever recall as we will continue the same joke in our club to keep the spirit of Charles in our hearts. Perhaps we too may learn the best is what we should strive for- whether it is in being a good person or just taking care of the birds. Charles lived this motto daily and for this we are so grateful for his presence in our club – a true gentleman, friend, and birding comrade who taught us much.

Charles is survived by daughter and TOS member, Harriet Jewell of Decatur, Georgia.

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## **In Memory of Chester Massey**

*submitted by Charles P. Nicholson*

Longtime Knoxville TOS members will mourn the death of Chester Massey. Chester was active in KTOS during the 1970s and 1980s and continued to be a member after that. He was a wonderful photographer and showed his bird and related travel photos at KTOS chapter meetings and elsewhere. He, Fred Alsop, and Jim Campbell made several birding trips across North America; these trips greatly contributed to Chester's entry into the 600 N.A. life list Club. Chester also helped fund several chapter projects, such as the nice Birds of Knox County checklist assembled by Fred Alsop and printed by the chapter in the 1970s. He was an avid naturalist, birder, fisherman, hunter and nature photographer. He was a consummate sportsman and hobbyist. Many of his bird photography ventures became the subject of local newspaper coverage, and for many years he was a frequent birding and nature photography speaker at area civic clubs and organizations.

## CHAPTER NEWS

**STEPHEN M. RUSSELL CHAPTER** - In December, the Bristol Bird Club members and guests celebrated the season at the home of John and Polly Moyle in the shadow of Bays Mountain in Kingsport. As usual, the super cooks of the BBC provide a bounty of excellent food and everyone had a great time. Dr. John Moyle was named 2006 BBC Birder of the year. Moyle organized and guided a group from the BBC and the region on a field trip to Trinidad and Tobago this past July. Dr. Moyle, who is on the board of directors of the famous Asa Wright center which is a world-class natural history destination for students of tropical ecology and of particular interest to birders. In 1999, *Audubon* magazine selected the Centre as one of just nine eco-lodges worldwide that it considered one of "The World's Ultimate Outposts." In December and January, BBC members coordinated and participated in Christmas Bird Counts in Bristol and Shady Valley, TN and Glade Spring, VA, as well as participating in the Elizabethton and Roan Mountain counts coordinated by the Herndon Chapter.

In January and February, Rick Phillips has helped birders from the area to enjoy seeing a pair of Merlins that are in the west Kingsport area in Oak Hill Cemetery.

January 20th, BBC members participated on a field trip to western Washington County, TN, among species sighted were Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, Loggerhead Shrike, Wilson's Snipe. February 24th, Rick Knight led a group of 12 birders to Burke's Garden in Tazewell County, Virginia, including Mary Jane Erwin, Bill Charles, Victoria Hanson, Kristi Tipton, Judy Roach, Lois Cox, Wilma Boyd, Nancy McPeak, John Hay, Mike Evans and Ron Harrington. The group enjoyed good weather and a great day of birding spotting 37 species, including two Golden Eagles.

Bristol Bird Club member D. Kamiron Cross, Blountville, TN, was selected for the Trustee Scholarship offered by North Greenville University (NGU), Tigerville, SC. The award is the school's most prestigious full tuition scholarship recognizing academic excellence and outstanding community achievements.

Another BBC member, Christopher O'Brian, will be heading to Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN on a scholarship to continue his quest for birds and herps. Chris has been chosen for a two-year

undergraduate research assistantship at Austin Peay State University. He begins research in May, working under herpetologist Dr. Floyd Scott. He will be assisting with their on going research of the Alligator Snapping Turtle in West Tennessee. He begins classes in June as a freshman.

In March, the Woodcock field trip to Shady Valley on the 10<sup>th</sup>. In April the Bristol Bird Club will sponsor the Spring Birding Weekend at Natural Tunnel State Park in Duffield, VA.

In May, club members are looking forward to hosting the Spring TOS Meeting at Waldo Miles Retreat Center with field trips to Shady Valley (TN) and Whitetop/Mt. Rogers NRA in Virginia — see separate announcement re hotel arrangements. The speaker will be Dr. Richard (Dick) Peake. Dr. Peake is a native of southwest Virginia, currently living in Texas, is the author of *The Birds of the Virginia Cumberlands*.

*Bill Grigsby*

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**GREENEVILLE CHAPTER** - Winter 2006-2007 generated quite a few noteworthy records for Greene County, some quite unusual. Perhaps at least partly because of the prolonged mild weather through most of the season, the following species were reported: American Bittern (Dec. 18), Great Egret (throughout the period), Osprey (Dec. 18), House Wren (2, Dec. 18), Brown Thrasher (reported from at least four sites, Dec.-Feb.), Baltimore Oriole (Dec. 18).

Several other notables also put in an appearance: Greater White-fronted Goose (2-4 at two sites on various dates in Feb.), Snow Goose (1-8 on scattered dates, Dec. 10-Feb. 25), Ross's Goose (1 in early Feb.), Red-shouldered Hawk (Dec. 18), Merlin (Dec.-Jan.), American Woodcock (several dates, Dec. 3-Jan. 5, and numerous dates in Feb.), Eurasian Collared-Dove (at two sites, one for the 32<sup>nd</sup> consecutive month), Rufous Hummingbird (last seen Dec. 23), Horned Lark (1-50+, from six sites), Fox Sparrow (1-2, Dec. 23-Feb. 19), Brewer's Blackbird (2, Jan. 14), Red Crossbill (6, Dec. 23).

The Chapter's Spring Count is slated for Saturday, Apr. 28. Birders from outside the county are invited to participate. Contact Don Miller (423-639-4100; [pandion@earthlink.net](mailto:pandion@earthlink.net)) for details.

*Don Miller*



## CHAPTER NEWS

The Elizabethton-based **LEE & LOIS HERNDON CHAPTER** of Tennessee Ornithological Society held its annual Christmas Bird Counts in Elizabethton and Roan Mountain on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2006, and Sunday, Dec. 17, 2006, respectively.

Participants in the 64th consecutive Elizabethton CBC found 71 species while those conducting the Roan Mountain CBC observed a total of 44 species. The Roan Mountain CBC has been held 54 times in the last 57 years. Hazardous winter conditions prevented the count from taking place in some years.

The European Starling was the most numerous bird found in Elizabethton. Participants found a total of 685 European Starlings. Other numerous birds on this count included American Crow (400), Rock Pigeon (290) and Dark-eyed Junco (212). A Canvasback represented only the fourth count record for the Elizabethton CBC. Canvasbacks have been found on previous counts in 1956, 1960 and 1983.

Bald Eagles have now been found on this count for 10 of the last 13 years. Before 1988, however, Bald Eagle had been reported only once on this count. Other good finds included Horned Lark, Northern Shoveler, Northern Bobwhite, Gray Catbird, Chipping Sparrow and Rufous Hummingbird.

For the Roan Mountain CBC, the most numerous bird was the American Crow with 192 individuals counted. Other numerous birds on this count included Dark-eyed Junco (110) and European Starling (65). Highlights for the Roan Mountain CBC included Wood Duck, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Red Crossbill and Pine Siskin.

Rick Knight tied a chapter record for a "Big Year" for 2006. With 237 species, Knight tied the record set by the late Howard P. Langridge in 2000. The former local "Big Year" records were 217 species seen by Knight in 1978 and 231 species seen by Brian Cross in 1989.

The Herndon Chapter has established the Howard P. Langridge Memorial Award to recognize any chapter member who reaches 200 species in a single year. For chapter members, the "Big Year" area consists of Carter County and adjacent Tennessee counties of Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington. The entire summit of Roan Mountain is also included, even though part of the summit is located in North Carolina but still adjacent to Carter County. Knight and Reece Jamerson, who tallied 203 species in 2006, received the first of the awards.

Officers for the Herndon Chapter include President Tom McNeil, Vice President Don Holt, Secretary Dianne Draper and Treasurer Gilbert Derouen. Rick Knight serves as statistician and Frank Ward as historian. Bryan Stevens serves as editor of the chapter newsletter.

*Bryan Stevens*



Pictured: Reece Jamerson, left, and Rick Knight, right, were the first recipients of the Howard P. Langridge Memorial Award.

*Photo by Jean Potter*

## CHAPTER NEWS

**JOHN SELLARS TOS LEBANON CHAPTER** has had a busy season despite absence of meetings. The Christmas Bird Count tallied a decent total and the observers enjoyed several favorite spots and bird treats, such as the number of Rusty Blackbirds. We always forgo a January meeting due to poor weather of past years (none lately) and for a chance to travel the extended Martin Luther King weekend. Rainy weather deterred several from the trip to Guntersville but two did manage to meet other Alabama birding friends and had a great time, despite the average birding numbers. Some new spots were discovered and this is always a treat. February's meeting was cancelled due to light snow and travel concerns of several. A slide show was to be presented by a member and will be used at another time. Meanwhile, two members have traveled to the Brownsville, Texas area and added many life birds to their list during February. We eagerly await their tales and will salivate over the beautiful birds they have seen!

Last, several of our members participated in the *Great American Bird Count* sponsored by Cornell. Participants enjoyed this venture and will plan on continuing this important record keeping in years to come. Spring awaits us with the following: International Count, a meeting to help identify common feeder birds (including telling difference between house finch & purple finch), assisting at the Wildflower Pilgrimage Bird Walk at Cedars of Lebanon in April, and perhaps a jaunt to another area to bird in nearby counties in spring. All are welcome.

Melissa Turrentine

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**KNOXVILLE CHAPTER** TOS enjoyed several interesting presenters and meetings in recent months. In November, our presenter was Dr. Jim Giocomo who presented research updates on Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge bird banding, including the Saw-Whet Owl Project, and UT Campus bird monitoring with a nice slide show to illustrate his points. Our December speaker was Lesley P. Bulluck, Ph.D. candidate and graduate research assistant in the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries at the University of Tennessee. Leslie talked about and showed images from her research dealing with forest ecology and

management: "Bird Communities in Three Different Successional Habitats: Reclaimed Coal Surface Mines, Utility Right-of-Ways, And Timber Harvests." Our January meeting was a traditional slide show by members of KTOS of their recent travels and bird pictures. The February presenter was John Laux who is a M.S. Candidate at the University of Tennessee in the Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries who gave a very interesting presentation regarding the effects of the decision by TVA to delay draw-down of reservoirs in the Tennessee River System. John's research was specifically comparing the temporal water bird use and food availability between Douglas and Chickamauga Reservoirs, which are typically drawn down at different times. Lots of great information and these presentations were all excellent and enjoyed by everyone in KTOS.

We have a new Chapter President - Mark Campen. Mark was contentedly serving as our Vice-President when the Mooney's decided to retire and begin traveling the countryside in their new RV. Mark now takes over for Dan Mooney. He is doing a fine job and is focusing on filling the vacant position for VP and increasing membership participation in other chapter activities. His major goal is to increase membership numbers in our chapter.

We hope to see Dan and Laurie Mooney in Bristol at the 2007 Spring Meeting. They are keeping their membership active in KTOS and are hoping to join us in Bristol in May.

We have a new newsletter editor for the Knoxville Chapter, Jon Mathson. Jon Mathson is taking over as our newsletter editor replacing Lyn Bales who served in this capacity for five years. Many thanks, Lyn. Jon began with the February 2007 issue and is doing a great job. Patty Ford will continue as the newsletter's distribution editor. Many thanks go to all of them for a job well done. Jon Mathson becomes the tenth editor of *Through the BiKNOXulars*.

Recent field trips have included: Kingston Steam Plant (Roane County) Victor Ashe Park (Knox County) Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge (Knox County), Vonore public lands (Monroe County), and Kyker Bottoms (Blount County)

## CHAPTER NEWS

### **Knoxville Chapter - continued**

Recently vacated State Level Directors positions have been filled. David Johnson and Alexander were elected at the January 2007 meeting. David Johnson was elected to serve the remainder of Charlie Muise's term. Jean Alexander was elected to serve the remainder of Laurie Mooney's term.

Many members of KTOS participated in December CBC's.

12/16 Norris, 12/17 Gatlinburg, 12/23 Crossville (new)  
12/30 Knoxville, 12/31 Cades Cove, 1/1 Hiwassee

*Kathy Bivens*

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**MEMPHIS CHAPTER News** - The MTOS 2006-07 program schedule combined reports on members' travels to exotic locales with general interest scientific reports. Van Harris reported on his January 2006 birding trip to many of the national parks in the foothills and mountains of the Himalayas in northern India. Van took extraordinary wildlife photos without a high powered telephoto lens. The most spectacular bird was the brightly colored Green Magpie, and the most exciting moment was coming face to face with a Bengal Tiger. Dick Preston reported on his 19-day trip to peninsular Malaysia and the northern part of Borneo that is part of Malaysia. Dick recommends Taman Negara National Park on the peninsula for its modern facilities and canopy walkways above one of the world's oldest rainforests, but especially enjoyed Danum Valley Park on Borneo. Scott Kraus, of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, reported on the efforts by the team led by Dr. Robert Webster to monitor the spread of influenza virus strains and produce weakened strains for vaccine development. The group has been monitoring influenza strains in wild and domestic waterfowl and other livestock world-wide for over 30 years. Scott Somershoe, the new state Ornithologist, gave an informative presentation on several recent research projects as well as the hectic first year in his new position. Scott is interested in developing cooperative projects with southeastern states using the same protocols to obtain data of broader regional significance. Developing management plans for Henslow's

Sparrow, Cerulean Warbler, and other species of concern has high priority. He would like to work with birders to create checklists for the state's designated Important Birding Areas (IBAs) as well as improving access to these areas. He would like to get data from point counts published and encourages birders to compile their data for publication in *The Migrant*.

Memphis Chapter members enjoyed winter field trips to Edmund Orgill Park, the lakes of Southwest Shelby County, the Wolf River Wildlife Management Area in Fayette County, and Reelfoot Lake State Park.

Notable 2006-07 winter bird sightings include Black-crowned Night-Heron (2) seen on a Nov. 22 field trip at Edmund Orgill Park in Millington, TN. On Nov 21, an American Tree Sparrow was recorded in the same park. A Common Redpoll was seen at a Tipton County bird feeder from Jan 9-14. A Peregrine Falcon was reported in Downtown Memphis from Nov. through Jan. Sandhill Cranes (17) were seen at the Memphis Earth Complex on Feb. 18.

Memphis Chapter members participated in Christmas Bird Counts in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas. The 79th Memphis Christmas Bird Count was held on December 17. Conditions were unusually warm, with mid-afternoon temperatures in the 70s. Thirty observers in six parties recorded 95 bird species and 1 count-week Bald Eagle. Especially uncommon sightings for this date were Tennessee Warbler and Baltimore Oriole. Notable sightings included Cackling Geese, Common Goldeneye, Greater Scaup, American Woodcock, Great-horned Owl, Loggerhead Shrike, American Pipit, Sedge Wren, Fish Crow, and Lapland Longspur. After the count, we shared refreshments and called the card at the home of Virginia Reynolds. The Fayette County, TN, count was held on December 19. Participants recorded 56 bird species including 10 sparrow species, all 7 woodpecker species, and a Marsh Wren. The December 30 Wapanocca/Shelby Forest CBC that covers natural areas on opposite banks of the Mississippi River in Arkansas and Tennessee was essentially ended by heavy rains after about 2 hours of birding. Despite the weather, 17 members turned out and 88 bird species were recorded including 13 species of waterfowl.

Margaret Jefferson

## CHAPTER NEWS

**NASHVILLE CHAPTER** – Our programs over the winter months ranged from Birds of Brazil to Bald Eagle Restoration, and an excellent presentation by Scott Somershoe, NTOS member and State Ornithologist about his plans for this year and beyond. Ed Gleaves and Ed Byrne discussed Christmas Counts, Past and Present. They used data derived from the CD version of The Migrant, and members participated with memorable experiences of Christmas Counts Past. In February Sandy Bivens of Davidson County Metro Parks discussed in detail three new nature centers to be built by Metro Parks and Recreation. These centers will provide a focus for nature education and bird related activities. They will be located at Bell's Bend, Beaman Park, and Shelby Bottoms where a greenway bridge is being constructed across the Cumberland River. NTOS members will be involved in the new centers as they have been at the existing Nature Center at Warner Parks.

Field Trips included a trip to the Sloughs WMA in Henderson KY and a fall visit to Ellington Agricultural Center. In November we had a great visit to Pace Point, Britton Ford and Environs. We managed a Scoter trifecta (White-winged, Surf, and Black), a Western Grebe and a Red-necked Grebe, and a Laughing Gull. It was a very enjoyable day. In December we visited Old Hickory and Percy Priest Lakes. Special birds sighted included an Orange-crowned Warbler, a singing Purple Finch, a lone Wilson's Snipe, and 178 Hooded Mergansers on Couchville Lake. A female Merlin was seen at the usual spot at Anderson Road Recreation Area. In January we were joined by the Warioto Audubon Chapter from Clarksville (they also joined us for the Pace Point trip) at Wheeler NWR. We had a fine day, ably led by Dwight Cooley, the refuge manager. Unusual sighting that day was a Tundra Swan, hanging out (actually loafing and flying) with a flock of Canada Geese. Species total for the day was 70.

*Susan Hollyday*

## Update from Charlie and Tracey Muise

*submitted by Charlie Muise*

We recently had news from Charlie Muise and Tracey and Allan Muise. Charlie sends the following message for *The Tennessee Warbler* readers.

Hello everyone in TOS.

Our new address is:

Charlie, Tracey and Allan Muise  
368 Eady Creek Road  
Barnesville, GA 30204  
Home Phone 678-967-9924

We have 4 acres of pine/grassland and we have banded about 150 birds on our property using just one net in about 15 hours! This includes a couple of Common Ground Doves a Brown-headed Nuthatch and 5 species of sparrows. All are welcome to visit. We're just 10 minutes off I-75 between Macon and Atlanta. We have a guest bedroom and are just 20 minutes away from E.L. Huie management area, and 40 minutes from Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at Piedmont NWR!

### June 30th Deadline

The deadline date for the August issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is June 30<sup>th</sup>. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

### Submit Material To:

Theresa Graham, Editor  
PO Box 366, Oakland TN 38060  
(901) 465-4263 (home)  
(901) 748-9324 (fax)  
e-mail: [2graham@bellsouth.net](mailto:2graham@bellsouth.net)



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..... **CHRISTMAS COUNT DATA DUE** .....

Data for the recent 2006/2007 Christmas Bird Count season is due. All Tennessee bird counts should have the following data included with the bird statistics:

1. Miles and hours by foot, car, and other modes (canoe, horse, etc.) for each party.
2. Miles and hours for each night-birding (owling) party are kept separately.
3. Feeder-watching hours are also kept separately; include names of feeder-watchers.
4. All count day weather data: temps; wind; precipitation; clouds, storms/fronts.
5. Please include the starting and ending times of the count.
6. Please include the number of observers, number of field parties, and names of all observers. For example, one person in a car is one observer in one party; 4 people in another car are 4 observers in one party; this example results in 5 observers in 2 parties.
7. Please send the data to Ron Hoff, 282 Hackworth Lane, Clinton, TN 37716. Email is acceptable at [aves7000@bellsouth.net](mailto:aves7000@bellsouth.net). I would like to have the data sometime in the first month after the count. This allows timely reporting to *The Migrant* editor.

Thanks for your efforts to continue monitoring Tennessee's birdlife. Your time and skills are very much appreciated.

Ron Hoff, TOS state count compiler

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REGISTRATION FORM - TOS SPRING MEETING  
MAY 4 - 6, 2007

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

TOS Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

\$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Registrations @ \$10each

\$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Dinner Reservations @ \$15 each

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed. Make Check payable to Bristol Bird Club

Mail registration form and check to:

Janice Martin  
701 Euclid Avenue  
Bristol, VA 24201

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